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AGAM-P (M) (5 Aug 68)

FOR OT RD 68X046

21 August 1968

AD392316

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report- Op QUYET THANG, Headquarters, 3d
Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, Period 11 Mar - 7 Apr 1968 (U)

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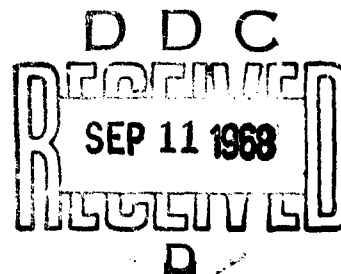
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 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96373

AVDE-BCO

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32)(U)

THRU: Command Channels

TO: Commander
U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: J343
APO 96243

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operation: QUYET THANG
2. Dates of Operation: 11 March - 7 April 1968
3. Location: Long An Province, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts, Gia Dinh Province..
4. Control or Command Headquarters: Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division located at Tan An (XS 546649).
5. Reporting Officer: Colonel George C. Benson, Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.
6. Task Organization:

a. U. S. Forces:

(1) Maneuver Battalions:

3d Bn, 39th Inf
4th Bn, 39th Inf
2d Bn, 3d Inf
One company (+), 2d Bn, 60th Inf
One company (+), 5th Bn, 60th Inf

(2) Brigade Control:

HHC, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div
2-4 Arty(-) DS
Btry B, 7-8 Arty (81mm and 175mm) GS Reinforcing
Btry C, 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing
Btry B(-), 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing
3d Plt, 9th MP Co (Spt)
3d Plt, Co C, 9th Sig Bn (Spt)
Co D, 709th Maint Bn (Spt)
Co C, 15th Engr Bn (DS)
Co C, 9th Med Bn (Spt)
Tm, 9th MI Det (Spt)
3d Plt, 335 RRC (Spt)
Sec, 4th AA Plt, 2d CA Co (Spt)
AV Fld Tm, 246th PSYOPS Co (Spt)
2d Plt, C Btry, 5-2 Arty (DS)
2d Plt, H Btry, 29th Arty (DS)

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b. Vietnamese forces operating in close coordination and cooperation with 3d Brigade units:

46th Inf Regt (ARVN)
50th Inf Regt (ARVN)
30th HAG
RF/PF Forces, Long An Province
Nha Be and Binh Chanh District Forces
5th Ranger Group
Capitol Military District Forces

7. Supporting Forces:

II Field Forces Aviation Units
7th USAF
1st Log Cnd

8. Intelligence:

a. Initial enemy situation:

(1) At the beginning of Operation Quyet Thang, the enemy forces were just commencing their withdrawal from the Capitol area to the immediate Saigon-Cholon area. The local force battalions used in the TET Offensive had absorbed heavy casualties and were attempting to avoid major contact. The enemy forces had established defensive areas just south and west of Saigon-Cholon and appeared determined to remain in place. The major forces involved were believed to be:

- (a) 2nd Independent Battalion located vic XS 7783.
- (b) 5th Nha Be Battalion located vic XS 8436.
- (c) 6th Local Force Battalion located vic XS 8436.
- (d) 506 Battalion located vic XS 7283.

(2) Enemy units were believed to be at 75% combat strength and preparing for a second major attack. There were also numerous reports of battalion sized units throughout the area. The VC TET Offensive had produced daily loads of reports of imminent attacks on almost every conceivable target within the area. Established agent nets were severely hampered by movement restrictions and the situation within Saigon-Cholon.

b. Developed enemy situation:

(1) Initial contact was established with enemy forces in the areas immediately adjacent to Saigon-Cholon. Contact with the 2nd Independent Battalion was established vic XS 7883, and the unit was driven from the area. There were sporadic contacts vic XS 8387 and XS 7485. The 6th LF Battalion suffered the loss of an arms cache vic XS 7283. Contacts southwest of Cholon began to develop along the communication-liaison route as enemy forces either left the area or went into hiding. The enemy attempted to resupply and reinforce his committed units and to maintain their disposition on the Saigon periphery.

(2) As the operation continued the enemy introduced the Phu Loi II Battalion in the Binh Chanh-Can Gioc border area. This unit was identified by contact and POW's. Successive contacts reduced the effectiveness of this battalion. The VC units continued to avoid contact and conducted resupply activities via sampans. The intelligence effort was directed against the VC LOC's in general and the interdiction of sampan traffic in particular. The VC units actually contacted during Operation Quyet Thang had suffered fifty to sixty per cent casualties and were incapable of mounting another offensive of the magnitude of the TET Offensive.

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(3) The terrain offered the enemy concealment only along the waterways and village areas. The lack of fresh water in Nha Be precludes the presence of major enemy forces east of the Cay Kho Canal for an indefinite period. Cross-country movement was restricted by the numerous waterways in the area and enemy supply movement was therefore primarily by sampan. The bridges and highways were critical terrain features and observation was limited only by nippa palm along the riverways. The north-south waterways provided the major enemy avenues of approach.

(4) As a result of Operation Quyét Thang, enemy units were forced to disperse and avoid contact. Enemy elements moved completely out of the area and left only the 2nd Independent and Phu Loi II Battalions remaining south of Saigon, dispersed and at 50% strength.

9. Mission: 3d Bde in close coordination and cooperation with 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), and 5th Ranger Gp (ARVN) conducts offensive operations to clear assigned AO within the Capitol Military District and to destroy VC/NVA forces operating in Long An Province.

10. Concept: The 3d Bde in close coordination and cooperation with 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), and 5th Ranger Gp (ARVN) conducted airmobile assaults, reconnaissance in force, cordon and search, extensive night patrolling and ambushes, and other offensive operations within Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts and Long An Province to clear designated Areas of Operation and destroy VC/NVA forces and their base areas employing three battalions as maneuver forces. The 2-3 Inf conducted clearing operations in Binh Chanh District to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces with emphasis on the 506th bn. The 4-39 Inf conducted clearing operations in Nha Be District to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces and established a company base at Cat Lai to secure main water LOC's in the area. The 3-39 Inf secured designated brigade basecamps and continued offensive operations in Long An Province to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces. Bde RRF was provided by one (1) company, 5-60 Inf(N).

11. Execution: Initial contacts during Operation Quyét Thang were limited to small scale operation and for the most part were relatively insignificant except where contact with NVA forces was established or enemy weapons/ammunition caches were discovered. The Brigade directed its efforts toward locating and destroying the VC/NVA forces south of the Saigon area that had participated in the Tet Offensive and preventing their resupply or consolidation. In Long An Province, brigade units secured vital installations, conducted interdiction operations along the Gia Dinh Province boundary, continued offensive operations against known or suspected VC base areas and reacted to current intelligence reports.

Typical of the actions that marked the start of Opn Quyét Thang was that experienced by L/4-39 Inf on 17 March 1968. The company conducted a riverine opn along the Cay Kho Canal in Nha Be District utilizing boats of the 30th River Assault Group. While sweeping assigned objectives, the unit came under SA, AT, and RPG fire which resulted in 5 US MIA and 1 US KIA. The following day the same unit captured 3-40 rocket propellant charges, three armor piercing grenades, several NVA uniforms, and destroyed 54 bunkers with overhead cover in the same general area. Although neither of these actions could be described as significant incidents, they represent the average encounter with the enemy during the early stages of Quyét Thang.

On 20 March 1968, the 2-3 Inf began to experience an increase in enemy activity in Binh Chanh District. While conducting a recon in force opn west of the San Giuoc River, Co 2 captured a NVA POW with AK-47 rifle and binoculars. A short time later the co came under SA and AW fire from an unknown size enemy force. The fire was returned and a sweep of the area netted six NVA KIA, six NVA POW's, six AK-47 rifles, two RPG-2 and two RPG-7 rocket launchers, one cal 45 pistol, hand grenades, ammunition, maps, and documents. The unit sustained three US MIA.

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The following day D/1-3 Inf established contact with fourteen (14) uniformed VC wearing helmets and carrying weapons in western Rach Kien District and killed four of the enemy. The Recon Plt from the same unit uncovered a cache containing med supplies, a large amount of ammunition, documents and clothing.

All operations were characterized by the discovery of numerous bunkers, all with overhead cover, and some reinforced with concrete. In addition the enemy displayed an increasing tendency to remain in these defensive positions and engage friendly forces within the effective range of small arms. Often he was dislodged only by the advance of friendly troops after repeated airstrikes and artillery supporting fires had been placed on the target.

Evidence of the enemy's willingness to remain and fight was visible on 24 March 1968 when 2-3 Inf established contact with an estimated VC plt in well constructed bunkers just south of the Gia Dinh Province boundary on the Cau Tran River. Artillery, LFT's and two airstrikes supported the contact which resulted in one US KIA and thirteen US MIA. VC losses included eight VC KIA (BC), ten VC KIA (Poss), two POW's, 2 RPD-56 MG's, 1 AK-47, and six com carbine captured and seventy-eight bunkers destroyed. On the same day C/7-1 Cav, OPCON to 3d Brigade, received SA and AW ground fire from an unknown size VC force while performing aerial reconnaissance mission over the east Mouse Ears area (XS 692600). Fire was returned by LFT's, artillery and an airstrike. The infantry element was inserted and a sweep of the area resulted in ten VC body count confirmed and one RPG-2 rocket launcher, one AK-47 rifle, and one 7.62mm MG captured.

Co B, 4-39 Inf established contact on 26 March 1968 with an estimated reinforced VC squad east of Da Phuoc in Nha Be District (XS 836811). Small arms and automatic weapons fire was exchanged and the contact was supported by LFT's and artillery. The unit sustained four MIA and three KIA while accounting for 7 VC KIA (BC), two AK-47's captured and 15 large bunkers with overhead cover destroyed. The VC were wearing fatigue uniforms with red scarves and steel helmets.

During a brigade operation two kilometers south of Saigon (XS 833847) on 29 March 1968, Co A, 4-39 Inf was engaged by an estimated VC company firing SA and AW's from positions on both flanks of the company. The unit reacted with LFT's, artillery, and three airstrikes. The fighters received AW fire, however, no damage to the aircraft resulted. Contact broke after approximately three hours and resulted in one US KIA and five VC KIA (BC).

The series of contacts that took place toward the end of March in the Nha Be - Binh Chanh area underscored the enemy's previously demonstrated intention to remain in the immediate vicinity of Saigon. It is significant that nearly every contact resulted in the capture of weapons, ammunition, and equipment, most of which was new or recently issued, indicating enemy resupply activities were being conducted on a regular basis. At this point in Operation Quyet Thang, it appeared that the VC/NVA forces in the Saigon area were in a period of training and recruitment and were attempting to compensate for the losses in equipment and personnel they had sustained in the TET Offensive.

The increase in VC activity noticeable during the last week of March continued through the termination of Quyet Thang. The 2-3 Inf on 30 March and 2 April 1968, established contact with platoon-size enemy forces in the vicinity of An Phu (XS 815825). The enemy was well dug-in and employed SA and AW fire from bunkers. Contact broke after LFT's, artillery, and airstrikes had been called in on the position. Only one US MIA resulted from the action. Enemy losses were significant and included seventeen (17) KIA (BC), seven AK-47 rifles, one complete 60mm mortar with sight, two BAR's, two 9mm pistols, one .38 cal and one .45 cal pistol, one US carbine, and twenty-nine (29) 105mm rounds. In addition 1200 lbs of rice, three sampans, forty-one (41) RPG rounds, 1500 rounds of SA ammunition, and sixty-five (65) bunkers were destroyed. These incidents confirmed the enemy's intention to maintain pressure on Saigon and conduct small-scale operations in an attempt to control major LOC's in the CMV area.

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During the last week of Tuyet Thang, contact with VC/NVA forces was extremely light. In Long An Province significant attacks occurred at an RF Company outpost in Thu Thua (XS 539733) and at the 5-60 Inf FS/PB at Binh Phuoc. The latter attack was launched with 82mm mortars, M-79 and small arms fire and resulted in one US KIA and nine US WIA. At Thu Thua the enemy employed RPG, recoilless rifle, and mortar fire as well as SA and AW. LFT's supporting the contact also received heavy AW fire. The one-hour attack resulted in three PF KIA, 20 RF KIA, five RD cadre WIA, and five US WIA (MAT Team, 3d Brigade).

Throughout Operation Tuyet Thang, the enemy conducted mortar attacks on US and GVN installations in the brigade TACI on a regular basis. These incidents represented his major effort in Long An Province except for some indication of troop movements and resupply activities. In Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts, Gia Dinh Province, brigade FS/PB's were also subjected to a number of indirect fire weapons attacks, the most significant occurring on 2 April 1968 when three rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire directed at the 4-39 Inf FS/PB at Nha Be struck a Shell Oil Company tank partially filled with mogas. One US KIA and one US WIA also resulted from the attack.

In Long An Province installations hit by mortar attacks included the 3-39 Inf basecamp at Rach Kien, the 5-60 Inf FS/PB at Binh Phuoc and the US artillery position at Ben Luc. The most significant attack occurred at Ben Luc on 1 April 1968 where LFT's came under heavy AW fire from suspected mortar positions north of the compound. Secondary explosions were reported when gunships returned fire and a large bunker complex including some reinforced with steel and concrete was located in the same general area by 50th Regiment (A.VII) forces during a follow-up operation. The complex was destroyed by engineer elements in support of 3d Brigade.

Many of the enemy attacks on major LOC's were directed against outposts and GVN installations along the Cay Kho Canal in Nha Be District. This vital waterway represented an important resupply route and staging area for enemy forces who were suspected to be preparing for a second major offensive against Saigon. Numerous mortar, RPG, and ground attacks were launched against RF/PF outposts along the canal during the last week in March. The increase in these attacks prompted the brigade to take immediate measures to improve the defensive posture of forces defending the outposts and to insure that reaction forces were immediately available to reinforce if necessary. Weapons, ammunition, and construction materials have been provided to critical outposts in the Nha Be area and night operations by brigade units have been conducted in close proximity to selected RF/PF locations.

Night activities during Operation Tuyet Thang were aimed at the interdiction of water LOC's and the destruction of enemy sampans carrying supplies and equipment. Most of the 108 sampans destroyed during the operation were engaged by aquabushes established on frequently traveled waterways or by night reconnaissance aircraft in support of the brigade. Operations of this type were extremely successful and forced the enemy to rely on other more difficult means of transportation in addition to destroying and/or capturing a significant amount of material.

Operation Tuyet Thang was successful from the standpoint of preventing any major enemy buildup in the area south of Saigon and preventing enemy forces from gaining control of any significant LOC's or population centers. Operations in Long An Province were somewhat limited by the small number of forces available, however, the brigade continued to interdict enemy infiltration routes and conducted a number of operations against known VC base areas. Security of waterways in the vicinity of Cat Lai continued during the operation and the company operating at that location employed airboats on night river patrols. One mechanized platoon was located at the Ben Luc Bridge nightly during Tuyet Thang to augment ARVN security forces. Combined operations continued to produce significant results and the Vietnamese 30th River Assault Group was used extensively as both a troop carrier and a screening force along inland waterways. As in most large-scale operations conducted by the brigade the success of Tuyet Thang was the result of a combined effort with ARVN/GVN forces made possible by the mutual understanding of a common mission.

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12. Results

a. Friendly losses for Operation Quiet Thang were as follows:

- (1) US KIA: 11
- (2) US DOW: 1
- (3) US MHA: 113
- (4) US MHA: 4

b. Enemy losses during Operation Quiet Thang were as follows:

(1) Personnel

- (a) VC KIA (LC): 115
- (b) NVA (BC): 6
- (c) PW: 8 (NVA) 6 (VC)
- (d) Detainees: 88

(2) Equipment captured:

Rifles AK-47-	22
Bolt action rifle types unk	2
French Mausers-	4
Chicom Carbine-	1
US Carbine-	2
Home made weapon-	1
Machine guns AK-	3
Machine guns 7.62-	1
Machine guns RPD-56-	2
Pistol cal 45-	1
Pistol cal 38-	1
Launcher Rocket-	8
Rockets-	112
Rocket propellant charges-	13
Mortar 82mm complete-	1
Mortar 60mm complete-	1
Base plate 60mm mortar-	1
Base plate 82mm mortar-	1
Launcher, Grenade M-79-	1
Ammunition:	
82mm mortar rds-	46
60mm mortar rds-	30
5.56mm	300
7.62 LG ammo-	900
AK-47 ammo-	7600
AK-47 bandoliers-	1
Carbine ammo-	35
Magazines: AK-47-	16
Grenade 40mm-	1
2.75 rockets-	2
C-4 Composition-	175 lbs
Hand grenade M-26-	6
Hand grenade Chicom-	5
Armor piercing hand grenades	3
Knife-	1
RPD 50 drums-	10
Batteries	
2.5 volt-	48
1/2 volt-	64
Wire-	1000 ft
Gas mask-	2

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Medical supplies-	85 lbs (+)
Compass M-2-	2
Blasting caps-	12
US Claymore-	1
Binoculars-	3
Rice-	5.2 tons

(3) Equipment destroyed:

Foxholes-	119
Bunkers-	1506
Structures-	73
Spider holes	137
Woodblocks-	35
Chicom grenade-	15
Mines-	4
105mm round-	4
Claymore-	1
RPG-7 rds-	70
Punji pits-	9
Sampans-	108
82mm mortar rd-	4
60mm mortar rd-	1

c. Tactical Air Support: During Operation Quiet Thang the 7th Tactical USAF supported the 3d Brigade "Go Devils" with fifty-seven preplanned and thirty-one immediate airstrikes in addition to conducting one combat skyspot. Approximately sixty of the airstrikes were followed up with sweeps of the target area by ground troops.

13. Administrative Matters

a. No significant problems were encountered in providing logistical support to brigade units during Operation Quiet Thang. FS/PB's of the 2-3 Inf and 4-39 Inf in Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts respectively while adequate for the dry season will require extensive engineer support prior to the monsoon season. Resupply of these units has been accomplished primarily by air and organic transportation. Battalion trains for the units in the C&D area were located in close proximity to FS/PB's. There was no change in the location of trains for the units in Long An Province.

b. Transportation for the movement of troops and supplies ran the gamut from organic vehicles to captured sampans during Operation Quiet Thang. Night convoys between Bearcat and Tan An were discontinued during the period as primary emphasis was placed on locating and destroying VC/NVA forces who had participated in the T&T offensive. Day convoys increased considerably in both number conducted and size of individual convoys as resupply activity resumed after a temporary halt during the aftermath of the attacks on Saigon.

c. Communications throughout the operation were provided by FI and RTT. VHF, carrier and RMI continued to be provided by the 9th Signal Battalion. Both RTT and VHF capabilities were extended to 2-3 Inf and 4-39 Inf and "hot lines" between brigade hqs and the FS/PB's in addition to the C&D TOC were installed during the operation.

d. Medical support continued to be provided by Company D, 9th Medical Battalion located at Tan An Army Airfield. No problem areas developed during the operation and dustoffs were conducted in a highly efficient and professional manner, often under severe conditions where the security of landing zones was a matter of degree.

e. Continuous operations created minor problems concerning maintenance of equipment, however command emphasis on performance of preventive maintenance at every available opportunity coupled with rotation of units between combat areas and basecamps remedied the situation.

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f. Combat service support activities were considered to be adequate and responsive to unit needs during Quyet Thang. The cooperation and mutual understanding between the Division Support Command and Brigade and Battalion Trains that was established during Operation Enterprise carried over into Quyet Thang and was responsible for the absence of any limiting features during the operation.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques

The nature of the brigade mission during Operation Quyet Thang and the change in enemy tactics necessitated a heavier reliance on new or modified equipment and techniques. In the aftermath of the TET attacks the enemy displayed an increasing capability to conduct offensive operations and a willingness to engage friendly forces from well constructed defensive positions usually with adequate overhead cover. This major shift in enemy methods of operation required a corresponding revision in US countermeasures. Since the VC normally delayed establishing contact with friendly forces until they had advanced to within the effective range of small arms, increased emphasis was placed on the use of tactical air and supporting artillery fires. LFT's were also used extensively to keep the enemy pinned down while friendly forces maneuvered against them and fighters made their passes. Once the contact was broken a thorough sweep of the area was conducted and all bunkers and/or tunnel complexes were destroyed. Whenever possible the enemy was pursued across district or province boundaries with appropriate coordination effected as the operation developed.

Security missions assigned to brigade units also resulted in the adoption of new techniques. The waterway security operation in the Cat Lai area was conducted by both aquabushes and river patrols on airboats. The combination of fixed ambush locations along vital inland waterways and a mobile riverine patrol usually of platoon-size on airboats was successful in accomplishing the assigned mission.

Another technique employed by the brigade to interdict enemy sampan traffic was the use of night reconnaissance aircraft. Both Forward Air Controllers and observers equipped with image intensification devices in UHID's were employed along major waterways within the TAOI. Sampans observed after curfew hours were engaged by door gunners or the LFT on call from brigade headquarters. A significant decrease in sampan traffic resulted from these operations as the enemy was forced to rely on other means of mobility to conduct resupply activities.

Numerous operations were conducted with the Vietnamese River Assault Group. RAG boats were used to insert troops, screen selected portions of waterways, and establish water blocks. Riverine operations in the CMD area produced significant results and were effective in preventing use of major water LOC's by the enemy.

Both G/7-1 Cav and D/3-5 Cav supported the brigade during Quyet Thang. The use of an air cavalry troop provided an extremely effective means of maintaining surveillance of areas in Long An Province where sufficient troops were not available to maintain the normal tempo of operations. In addition the Cav troop's organic infantry elements provided the capability to conduct immediate insertions and sweeps of areas that had produced significant sightings. Air Cavalry elements also participated in brigade size operations and were employed on flank security as well as aerial reconnaissance missions. The results of air cavalry operations warrant more frequent use of this capability in the brigade TAOI.

The District Operations and Intelligence Centers with their combined staffs continue to be the most effective means yet established to identify and coordinate military and infrastructure strike targets. The Weekly Area Coordination Center Meeting held at both battalion/district level and brigade/province level has also promoted cooperation and support in an effort to reach mutually acceptable objectives.

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Operation Quyet Thang witnessed a major change in enemy methods of operation and required that the brigade utilize all available resources to accomplish its many-faceted mission. Through a combination of conventional techniques, modified to fit the enemy's change in tactics and the employment of specialized equipment Quyet Thang succeeded in fragmenting the VC/NVA forces south of Saigon and prevented their reorganization.

15. Commander's Analysis

From the start of Operation Quyet Thang it was obvious the enemy had made some significant changes in previously established patterns of activity, and that we now faced a more determined foe than ever before. In almost all enemy contacts established with VC/NVA forces in the CMD area several characteristics were clearly developed. First, defensive positions were constructed better than ever before often reinforced with concrete and steel and adequate overhead cover. Secondly, bunker complexes and particularly fighting trenches were frequently located just forward of tree lines or nippa palm areas instead of deep within the natural foliage, the site most often selected by the enemy in the past. This of course meant that prestrikes and artillery prepops had little effect when delivered in areas providing natural concealment to the enemy. Thirdly, the VC/NVA displayed an increasing tendency to engage friendly forces at close range, usually within the effective range of small arms, which prevented the use of supporting fires and tactical air during the initial phases of contact. In addition, the enemy demonstrated his willingness to stay and fight on numerous occasions and was often dislodged only by repeated airstrikes and heavy artillery fires coupled with the advance of friendly forces over his positions.

These tactics were comparatively new to brigade units who had experienced a rather elusive enemy in Long An Province, reluctant to establish contact with friendly forces and quick to break and run when the attack was met with any show of force. The change in enemy methods of operation can probably be accounted for by the presence of NVA cadre in local force units and the availability of newer weapons and equipment such as the AK-47 Assault Rifle and RPG-2 and -7 rocket launchers.

Brigade units were quick to grasp the enemy's intentions and made appropriate adjustments in their tactics to cope with the situation. As a result enemy-initiated contacts frequently resulted in significant losses in VC/NVA personnel and equipment at a minimum risk to friendly forces.

Initially the brigade focused its attention on the Binh Chanh - Nha Be area in an effort to locate and destroy those forces that had participated in the TET attacks on Saigon. At the same time emphasis was placed on interdicting infiltration routes through Long An Province. The two battalions in the CMD area were able to provide adequate coverage of their AO's during both day and night operations. In Long An only one full battalion was available for combat operations during the day. Security requirements necessitated the retention of all available forces at night within the immediate vicinity of brigade basecamps. Since the 2-60 Inf(-) and 5-60 Inf(-) were OPCON to the 1st Brigade, the 3-39 Inf assumed responsibility for basecamp security within Long An Province. The companies that remained at Tan Tru and Binh Phuoc were used for basecamp security and brigade RRF respectively. Airstrike operations were conducted by 3-39 Inf on a regular basis throughout Quyet Thang and Air Cav Troops were also employed in Long An Province to accomplish the assigned mission. The 3-39 Inf focused its operations on western Rach Kien and along the province boundary in the vicinity of the Can Giuoc River while the Cav elements operated frequently in the Mouse Ears and Elbow areas.

Night operations utilized the aquabush concept which had proven successful during the latter stages of Operation Enterprise. The aquabush principle is sound and when combined with the use of night reconnaissance aircraft is an extremely effective means of preventing enemy resupply activities.

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The combined operations conducted with 30th MAG and 5th Ranger Group produced significant results and the brigade liaison team at C&D headquarters insured coordination was effected with all units. Many of the significant contacts during Quyet Thang occurred on combined operations and the mutual coordination and cooperation of US and ARVN/CVN units resulted in the destruction and/or capture of a sizeable amount of enemy supplies and equipment.

Although the situation at the conclusion of Operation Quyet Thang indicated the enemy had elected to remain in the Saigon area and would probably utilize his newly acquired capability to conduct offensive operations, the reorganization of units that participated in the TET Offensive was halted and resupply activities were severely hampered. The fragmentation of the enemy force and the capture and/or destruction of a significant amount of material has limited the VC/NVA forces to small scale operations thereby substantially reducing the immediate threat to the Saigon area.

16. Recommendations:


a. The use of air cavalry troops in the brigade TAOI has unlimited potential and should be exploited as soon as possible. With an extended AO such as that assigned to the 3d Brigade adequate coverage is difficult even with sufficient airmobile lift companies. The air cav troop can provide effective surveillance of a large area and has the inherent capability to react to significant sightings.

b. The aquabush concept has proven to be an effective deterrent to enemy resupply activity on major waterways. The concept should be continued with a selected portion of each maneuver battalion's elements conducting these operations nightly.

c. Assistance to RP/PF outpost/watchtowers must continue, however, every effort should be made to coordinate the issue of weapons, ammunition, and materials by Division units with Province/District authorities. The upgrading program should be relentlessly pursued with CVN counterparts and measures that provide for immediate response to requests for assistance should be instituted.

d. The security mission at Cat Lai should be turned over to ARVN as soon as possible in order to free the US company presently located there for operations in the brigade AO. The continuing requirement to provide company-size security forces each night in AO Robbie reduces the brigade's capability to conduct combat operations against the VC/NVA forces that remain in the CMD area.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


JERRY L. BURT
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CONFIDENTIAL

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